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GROUPING PRACTICES INVOLVING
SELECTED SEVENTH GRADERS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of how to organize classrooms for instructional purposes is not new; indeed, there have been conflicting opinions on the subject and practice of grouping ever since pupils were first placed together for formal group instruction. Some of the more major subjects of controversy in recent years have dealt with self-contained classrooms versus departmentalization, graded classes versus non-graded classes, and ability grouping versus non-ability grouping.

Much has been written about the relative merits of each type of grouping plan and often the reasons given as advantages of one plan are listed as disadvantages in the opposite or alternate plan. Regardless of the research that has been done, many schools continue to use the grouping practices that, for various reasons, seem to work best for them. One of the determinants in the success or failure of a given plan is the acceptance or rejection by the patrons of the school in which the plan is used.

To the extent that paramount importance is placed upon subject mastery, the organization of the school will reflect that value. If, on the other hand, paramount importance is attached to the full development of children, then organization of the school will reflect that value. Whatever the goal, a local school and community must freely exercise its best judgment in making a decision on organization for instruction.¹

¹Stuart E. Dean, "Organization for Instruction in the Elementary Schools," School Life, XLIII (May, 1960), 8-9.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine if pupils, parents, and teachers have a preference in type of classroom organization in the Winterset Community School District, Winterset, Iowa.

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Winterset schools operate on a K-6-2-4 grade plan. The South Ward building in Winterset houses all of the pupils in kindergarten, about half of the students in each of the grades one through four, and all of the students in grades seven and eight. The North Ward building in Winterset houses the balance of the students in grades one through four. The Patterson building, located eight miles east of Winterset in the town of Patterson, houses all of the pupils in grade five plus a small section of special education students. The Scott building, located six miles southeast of Winterset in a rural area, houses all of the pupils in grade six.

Students in the Winterset schools are subjected to a variety of pupil grouping practices in grades four through seven.

In grade four, heterogeneous grouping is practiced in the homeroom. Some of the pupils change rooms for reading classes to be in similar reading readiness groups; otherwise, the homeroom group is together for all classes. Music and science are taught by special teachers.

In grade five, homogeneous grouping is practiced in the homeroom. Reading readiness is the primary determinant in group placement of the

pupils. Students stay together as a class unit all day long, but leave the room for music, science, and physical education under the direction of special teachers.

In grade six, heterogeneous grouping in the homeroom is again employed. Class sessions as a homeroom group are for science, health, art, music, and physical education. For classes in reading, arithmetic, language, and social studies, students are grouped according to individual ability or readiness level in each subject. Students may or may not leave the homeroom depending upon group and teacher assignment.

In grade seven, homogeneous grouping is practiced in the homeroom. Group assignments are made on the basis of academic achievement, intelligence, and teacher recommendation. Students stay together for all classes except physical education and enrichment courses and all classes are on a departmentalized basis.

For purposes of obtaining information to use in considering future grouping plans in the Winterset schools, this study attempted to determine whether pupils, parents, and teachers have a preference in the grouping practices previously described.

III. LIMITATIONS

The study was limited to the Winterset Community School District, Winterset, Iowa, and involved 114 seventh grade students, 100 parents of seventh graders, and thirty-one teachers of grades four through seven. The selection of the teachers was arbitrary, but the writer chose to include only those who were in some way associated with the grades involved in the study. The seventh grade students were selected for the study

because they had experienced the grouping practices of each of the grades involved.

Further limitations of the study were directed to the respondents in that they were asked to compare pupil grouping practices and not to compare personalities of teachers and principals, nor to compare buildings and grades, as such.

IV. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Homogeneous grouping. "Homogeneous grouping" is the practice of grouping pupils of similar academic achievement abilities, for purposes of instruction.

Heterogeneous grouping. "Heterogeneous grouping" is the practice of grouping pupils of dissimilar academic achievement abilities, for purposes of instruction.

Grouping practices. "Grouping practices" is the act of placing pupils into groups for purposes of instruction.

Enrichment courses. "Enrichment courses" are used in a program which offers to the students, courses which are not normally taught in the regular academic program.

V. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The children of today's schools are subjected to a variety of pupil grouping practices and many different types of organizational plans for instruction. Available research is not at all conclusive in

placing superiority of one plan over another. Franseth stated that investigation of the research on different grouping practices may raise as many questions as it answers.¹ In addition, whereas part of the research tends to concur with general beliefs and previous findings on some facets of pupil grouping, research on other aspects tends to refute general beliefs and earlier studies. Perhaps this general state of confusion and confliction has best been summarized by Stoddard who has suggested five different theses with regard to educational research which are indicative of the trouble spots:

Thesis I

Much current educational research is prosaic or repetitive; it lacks impact.

Thesis II

Much current educational research is fragmentary and discontinuous.

Thesis III

Even when useful, much educational research avoids basic issues.

Thesis IV

Educational research tends to avoid what is controversial and therefore exciting.

Thesis V

Educational research is frequently divorced from a superstructure in human values, especially as expressed in the fine arts.²

Some of the recent studies regarding pupil grouping practices reveal the findings and conclusions of those who have done the research. In a study of practices in Iowa, conducted by Shaw in 1961, it was revealed that

¹Jane Franseth, "Does Grouping Make A Difference in Pupil Learning?," Toward Effective Grouping, 1962-63 Membership Service Bulletin No. 5-A, (Association for Childhood Education International, 3615 Wisconsin Avenue, N. W., Washington 16, D. C., 1962), pp. 25-33.

²G. D. Stoddard, The Nation's Schools, 49:44-46, cited by Harold G. Shane (ed.), The American Elementary School, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 283.

during the years 1950 to 1960 there were numerous types of grouping for instruction in the elementary schools, and that ability grouping, with emphasis on the gifted, was very much in evidence.¹

In a study conducted by the Office of Education in 1958, Dean stated that, for the nation as a whole, grades one to six in more than three-fourths of the schools were organized on the one-teacher-per-classroom basis, and that only about one-tenth were partly or completely departmentalized. Grades seven and eight in slightly less than three-fourths of the schools were departmentalized.²

One of the arguments presented against ability grouping has been that students in general are deprived of the opportunity to associate with pupils of all levels of ability and therefore do not get a proper perspective of the way of life for which they are preparing. Recent research by Deitrich does not substantiate this argument. His sample included sections of sixth grade classrooms in two separate school systems. One grouped by ability; the other did not. From his study, which concurred with previous studies, Deitrich concluded that ability grouping does not necessarily limit a child in his friend relationships and that there is a strong tendency for the "bright" to select the "bright" as friends and the "dull" to select the "dull."³

¹Donald G. Shaw, "Grouping for Instruction in the Elementary School, 1950-1960" (unpublished Master's thesis, Drake University, Des Moines, 1962), p. 37.

²Dean, loc. cit.

³Francis R. Deitrich, "Comparison of Sociometric Patterns of Sixth-Grade Pupils in Two School Systems: Ability Grouping Compared with Heterogeneous Grouping," Journal of Educational Research, LVII, No. 10 (July-August, 1964), 507-513.

One of the arguments by proponents of ability grouping has been that ability grouping makes better allowances for individual differences, and pupil achievement therefore is enhanced at all levels of ability. Recent studies tend to refute this proposal. For example, Milliman and Johnson found that there is no significant relationship between gains and student homogeneity. Their study involved over 8,000 gain scores in mathematics and language for seventh and eighth grade pupils in twenty-eight schools.¹

After examination of research on the relative merits of different procedures for pupil learning and procedures, Franseth stated that "available evidence seems not to support the assumption that learning takes place more effectively if the range of differences in pupil activity is materially reduced."²

Educators generally agree that the truly dedicated teacher is constantly concerned about the motivational factors which affect the potential production by pupils. Although the factors which affect production are many, evidence seems to suggest that grouping practices have both positive and negative attributes. Schmuck conducted a study of grades three through six in certain schools in Michigan which supported previous research. He found that children who think of themselves as being well liked or who were actually found to have that status tended to make better

¹Jason Milliman and Mauritz Johnson, Jr., "Relation of Section Variance to Achievement Gains in English and Mathematics in Grades Seven and Eight," American Educational Research Journal, I (January, 1964), 47-51.

²Franseth, loc. cit.

use of their academic capabilities than students who think of themselves as not being well liked or who were actually found to be less well liked by their classmates.¹ It is true that there is social implication in the study by Schmuck, but it can hardly be argued that the condition does not affect the motivation of the pupil. Bany and Johnson suggested that a cohesive group pattern is an important factor in learning and productivity, but that there can be both favorable and unfavorable effects, depending upon the goal of the predominant group influences.²

Prehm stated that complex and challenging problems in grouping practices have been, for many decades, and continue to be, issues of concern.³ In summing up her study, Prehm concluded that grouping practices of the last decade:

- a. indicate a strong trend away from traditional practices.
- b. point up the need for change and improvement of curricula.
- c. employ more flexibility in taking care of individual differences.
- d. endeavor to alleviate tensions within the classroom.
- e. give recognition to individual teacher competencies.³

¹Richard Schmuck, "Some Relationships of Peer Liking Patterns in the Classroom to Pupil Attitudes and Achievement," School Review, LXXI (Autumn, 1963), 337-359.

²Mary A. Bany and Lois V. Johnson, Classroom Group Behavior (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964) p. 57.

³Mary H. Prehm, "Grouping for Instruction in the Elementary School," (unpublished Master's thesis, Drake University, Des Moines, 1962), p. 41.

⁴Ibid., p. 47.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF DATA

I. PROCEDURE

After a review of the literature and related studies and after a discussion with the superintendent and principals in the Winterset Community Schools, Winterset, Iowa, questionnaires were devised to obtain data for the study. Because of the differences in educational background of the three groups of respondents, three different questionnaires were drawn up with regard to wording of instructions and wording of the questions. One questionnaire was devised to meet the needs of students in seventh grade, one to meet the needs of parents, and one to meet the needs of teachers. Further differences existed on the questionnaires with regard to the selection that a respondent could make for each question. Each question on all three questionnaires had reference to the pupil grouping plan being used in each of the grades four through seven in the study; however, the student and parent questionnaires made reference by actual grade number, whereas the teacher questionnaire made reference to a plan designated by a letter which corresponded to a particular grade. A complete questionnaire for each group of respondents will be found in the appendix.

For purposes of validation, the student questionnaire was administered to twenty-seven sixth grade students, the parent questionnaire was administered to seven parents not involved in the study, and the teacher

questionnaire was administered to six teachers not involved in the study. Each questionnaire was approved by the superintendent and principals of the Winterset schools.

To the extent possible, the same questions were asked of all three groups of respondents, but substitutions and/or additions of questions were made where it seemed advisable.

The student questionnaire contained a list of twenty-two questions and was administered by the investigator to 114 seventh grade students in the Winterset schools. Of the 114 students involved, fourteen indicated that they had moved into the school district sometime after fourth grade which caused them to be ineligible for the study. Of the remaining 100 questionnaires, two were rendered incomprehensible by duplication of choices marked. Of the total of 114 questionnaires administered to seventh grade students, ninety-eight were usable, for a total of eighty-six per cent.

The parent questionnaire contained a list of twenty questions and was sent home with the 100 students who had attended grades four through seven in the Winterset schools. Eighty of the questionnaires were returned, but four were not usable because of duplication of choices marked or for other reasons. This left a total of seventy-six usable parent questionnaires, or seventy-six per cent.

The teacher questionnaire contained a list of twenty-five questions. A total of thirty-one teachers of grades four through seven in the Winterset schools participated in the study and all questionnaires were usable.

All three questionnaires asked respondents to make a comparison of

the pupil grouping practices employed in each of the grades four through seven in the Winterset schools with regard to pupil progress and achievement, social implications to pupils, motivational influences upon pupils, emotional effects upon pupils, and teacher-pupil relationships. In addition, the teacher questionnaire contained three additional questions which asked teachers to make a comparison of the grouping practices with regard to the effect that the practices have upon teachers.

II. ANALYSIS OF DATA

After completing the administration of questionnaires, the resulting data were compiled and examined. The data, relative to each of the questions asked are contained in this chapter in tabular form. It should be pointed out that the tables which follow contain the grade number referred to on the pupil and parent questionnaires, as well as the plan letter referred to on the teacher questionnaire.

Regarding the grade (plan) in which competition was greatest among students, forty-one per cent of the respondents selected grade seven. By groups, fifty per cent of the pupils chose grade seven and thirty-three per cent of the parents selected grade seven. The teacher group chose grade six by a slight margin over grade seven, thirty-nine per cent to thirty-five per cent. Regarding place of greatest competition, the number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students,

parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	4	11	2	17
5	B	11	5	4	20
6	C	24	11	12	47
7	D	49	25	11	85
No Choice		<u>10</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>36</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils had to work hardest to get assignments done, fifty-nine per cent of all respondents selected grade seven. The choice was made by sixty-four per cent of the students, fifty-one per cent of the parents, and sixty-eight per cent of the teachers. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	2	8	0	10
5	B	7	5	2	14
6	C	21	17	8	46
7	D	63	39	21	123
No Choice		<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils were under the most pressure with school work, forty-one per cent of all respondents selected grade seven. The choice was made by thirty-four per cent of the students, forty-three per cent of the parents, and fifty-eight per cent of the teachers. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	7	9	1	17
5	B	8	2	1	11
6	C	29	25	11	65
7	D	33	33	18	84
No Choice		<u>21</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>28</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils felt most anxious to do school work from day to day, choices made were somewhat divided. Twenty-eight per cent of all respondents chose grade seven, but twenty-five per cent selected grade five. By groups, twenty-nine per cent of the pupils selected grade four and twenty-seven per cent chose grade five. Thirty-seven per cent of the parents chose grade seven and thirty-two per cent of the teachers chose grade five. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	28	7	1	36
5	B	26	16	10	52
6	C	10	14	6	30
7	D	23	28	6	57
No Choice		<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>30</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils felt most out of place in their classes, thirty-nine per cent of all respondents selected no choice. Of the total respondents who made a choice, twenty-one per cent chose grade four and twenty-one per cent chose grade six. By groups, thirty-three per cent of the students made no choice, fifty-eight per cent of the parents made no choice, but forty-nine per cent of the teachers selected grade four. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	19	9	15	43
5	B	11	8	4	23
6	C	28	11	5	44
7	D	8	4	3	15
No Choice		<u>32</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>80</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade(plan) in which pupils felt bored with school work in general, thirty-six per cent of all respondents made no choice. Of those who did make a choice, twenty-one per cent selected grade six. By groups, thirty-one per cent of the students chose grade six, forty-one per cent of the parents made no choice, and forty-eight per cent of the teachers made no choice. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	17	10	10	37
5	B	12	9	4	25
6	C	30	11	2	43
7	D	18	7	0	25
No Choice		<u>21</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>75</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils did their best work in all subjects, twenty-nine per cent of all respondents chose grade seven, but twenty-eight per cent chose grade six. Pupil choices were quite evenly matched for grades five, six, and seven, with twenty-six per cent of the students choosing grade five, twenty-five per cent choosing grade six, and twenty-five per cent choosing grade seven. Thirty-four per cent of the parents selected grade seven and forty-five per cent of the teachers chose grade six. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as

selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	12	7	2	21
5	B	25	16	4	45
6	C	24	20	14	58
7	D	24	26	9	59
No Choice		<u>13</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>22</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which school work offered the most favorable degree of challenge to all pupils, forty-two per cent of all respondents chose grade seven. By groups, forty per cent of the students chose grade seven, fifty per cent of the parents chose grade seven, but forty-eight per cent of the teachers chose grade six. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	5	8	1	14
5	B	18	4	4	26
6	C	17	10	15	42
7	D	39	38	9	86
No Choice		<u>19</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>37</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils had the most trouble getting school work done, forty per cent of all respondents selected grade

seven. The choice was made by forty per cent of the students, forty-one per cent of the parents, and forty-two per cent of the teachers. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	7	7	3	17
5	B	5	3	1	9
6	C	22	16	10	48
7	D	39	31	13	83
No Choice		<u>25</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>48</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupil progress was of most concern, fifty-six per cent of all respondents chose grade seven. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	4	7	3	14
5	B	4	6	6	16
6	C	13	15	2	30
7	D	70	31	14	115
No Choice		<u>7</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>30</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils had the best opportunity

to learn about other pupils, thirty-five per cent of all respondents selected grade seven. By groups, thirty-four per cent of the pupils chose grades seven, but thirty-two per cent selected grade six. Fifty per cent of the parents chose grade seven, but of the teachers grade six was chosen by forty-five per cent. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	11	3	12	26
5	B	15	3	1	19
6	C	31	10	14	55
7	D	33	38	2	73
No Choice		<u>8</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>32</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils seemed to be most upset about school experiences in general, thirty-one per cent of all respondents chose grade six. The number of choices as selected by parents and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	--	10	6	16
5	B	--	6	3	9
6	C	--	26	7	33
7	D	--	14	8	22
No Choice		--	<u>20</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>27</u>
Totals		--	76	31	107

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils seemed to be least upset about school experiences in general, twenty-seven per cent of all respondents chose grade four and twenty-seven per cent chose grade five. The number of choices as selected by parents and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4 A	--	18	11	29
5 B	--	18	11	29
6 C	--	7	3	10
7 D	--	22	0	22
No Choice	--	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>17</u>
Totals	--	76	31	107

Regarding the grade in which pupils felt that they most enjoyed the other pupils in the homeroom group, forty-three per cent of the students chose grade seven. The number of choices as selected by students was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	9	--	--	9
5	18	--	--	18
6	19	--	--	19
7	42	--	--	42
No Choice	<u>10</u>	--	--	<u>10</u>
Total	98	--	--	98

Regarding the grade in which pupils felt that they least enjoyed

the other pupils in the homeroom group, thirty-four per cent chose grade six. The number of choices as selected by students was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	18	--	--	18
5	12	--	--	12
6	33	--	--	33
7	17	--	--	17
No Choice	<u>18</u>	--	--	<u>18</u>
Total	98	--	--	98

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils received the proper amount of individual attention, twenty-nine per cent of all respondents chose grade five. The choice was made by thirty-one per cent of the students, twenty-two per cent of the parents, and forty-five per cent of the teachers. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, teachers, and parents was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4 A	11	8	4	23
5 B	30	17	14	61
6 C	12	16	3	31
7 D	24	9	4	37
No Choice	<u>21</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>53</u>
Totals	98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which competition was more nearly ideal for desired educational growth, thirty-one per cent of all respondents chose grade seven. Twenty-nine per cent of the pupils chose grade seven as did thirty-six per cent of the parents. Fifty-five per cent of the teachers selected grade six. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, teachers, and parents was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	5	3	0	8
5	B	25	9	4	38
6	C	24	13	17	54
7	D	28	27	10	65
No Choice		<u>16</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>40</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which the pupils showed the most growth in academic achievement, forty-two per cent of all respondents selected grade seven. Forty-three per cent of the pupils chose grade seven, followed by twenty-eight per cent who selected grade six. Thirty-seven per cent of the parents chose grade seven and twenty-four per cent chose grade six. Of the teachers grade six was selected by thirty-nine per cent, but thirty-six per cent made no choice. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	4	4	1	9
5	B	11	13	1	25
6	C	27	18	12	57
7	D	52	28	6	86
No Choice		<u>4</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>28</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils had the best attitude about school work, thirty-one per cent of all respondents selected grade seven. Thirty per cent of the pupils selected grade seven and thirty-seven per cent of the parents chose grade seven. Thirty-two per cent of the teachers made no choice, but of those that made a selection, twenty-three per cent chose grade seven. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	16	6	3	25
5	B	26	11	5	42
6	C	18	14	6	38
7	D	29	28	7	64
No Choice		<u>9</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>36</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which class work moved at a pace

best suited to the individual pupil, thirty-seven per cent of all respondents chose grade seven. The selection of grade seven was made by forty per cent of the students and by thirty-seven per cent of the parents. Fifty-two per cent of the teachers chose grade six. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	4	3	0	7
5	B	22	9	4	35
6	C	25	12	16	53
7	D	39	28	10	77
No choice		<u>8</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>33</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils felt more at ease in discussing personal problems with the teacher, thirty per cent of all respondents made no choice. Twenty-six per cent of all respondents who did make a choice selected grade five. By groups, thirty-two per cent of the pupils selected no choice and twenty-five per cent chose grade six. Thirty-six per cent of the parents made no choice and twenty-six per cent chose grade five. Fifty-eight per cent of the teachers chose grade five. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by

students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	10	6	6	22
5	B	15	20	18	53
6	C	24	9	0	33
7	D	18	14	3	35
No Choice		<u>31</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>62</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which the pupils felt more at ease in seeking teacher help with class work, thirty-three per cent of all respondents chose grade five. This choice was made by twenty-nine per cent of the pupils, twenty-nine per cent of the parents, and fifty-five per cent of the teachers. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students, parents, and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	12	11	6	29
5	B	29	22	17	68
6	C	19	17	2	38
7	D	26	15	2	43
No Choice		<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>27</u>
Totals		98	76	31	205

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils felt just as important as most of the other pupils in class, twenty-nine per cent of all

respondents selected grade seven. Thirty-one per cent of the pupils selected grade seven, but twenty-five per cent made no choice. Thirty-two per cent of the teachers chose grade six. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	12	--	6	18
5	B	13	--	6	19
6	C	19	--	10	29
7	D	30	--	7	37
No Choice		<u>24</u>	--	<u>2</u>	<u>26</u>
Totals		98	--	31	129

Regarding the grade (plan) in which pupils felt most reluctant to enter into class discussions, twenty-eight per cent chose grade seven and twenty-five per cent chose grade four. The number of choices for each grade (plan) as selected by students and teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	15	--	15	30
5	B	11	--	2	13
6	C	21	--	6	27
7	D	29	--	4	33
No Choice		<u>22</u>	--	<u>4</u>	<u>26</u>
Totals		98	--	31	129

Regarding the plan in which the teacher had the best opportunity to fulfill all teacher obligations, thirty-nine per cent of the teachers selected grade five. The number of choices made by teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	--	--	2	2
5	B	--	--	12	12
6	C	--	--	7	7
7	D	--	--	5	5
No Choice		--	--	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
Totals		--	--	31	31

Regarding the plan in which the teacher was offered the most favorable degree of challenge, forty-two per cent of the teachers chose grade seven. The number of choices made by teachers was as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>		<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4	A	--	--	3	3
5	B	--	--	4	4
6	C	--	--	7	7
7	D	--	--	13	13
No Choice		--	--	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
Totals		--	--	31	31

Regarding the plan under which the control of pupils was most favorable, twenty-nine per cent of the teachers chose grade five, but the

choices made were quite evenly distributed as follows:

<u>Choice of Grade (Plan)</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Totals</u>
4 A	--	--	7	7
5 B	--	--	9	9
6 C	--	--	4	4
7 D	--	--	6	6
No Choice	--	--	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
Totals	--	--	31	31

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

I. SUMMARY

Students in the Winterset schools are subjected to a variety of pupil grouping practices in grades four through seven.

In grade four, heterogeneous grouping is practiced in the homeroom. Some of the pupils change rooms for reading classes to be in similar reading readiness groups; otherwise, the homeroom group is together for all classes. Music and science are taught by special teachers.

In grade five, homogeneous grouping is practiced in the homeroom. Reading readiness is the primary determinant in group placement of the pupils. Students stay together as a class unit all day long, but leave the room for music, science, and physical education under the direction of special teachers.

In grade six, heterogeneous grouping in the homeroom is again employed. Class sessions as a homeroom group are for science, health, art, music, and physical education. For classes in reading, arithmetic, language, and social studies, students are grouped according to individual ability or readiness level in each subject. Students may or may not leave the homeroom depending upon group and teacher assignment.

In grade seven, homogeneous grouping is practiced in the homeroom. Group assignments are made on the basis of academic achievement, intelligence, and teacher recommendation. Students stay together for all classes except physical education and enrichment courses and all classes

are on a departmentalized basis.

For purposes of obtaining information to use in considering future grouping plans in the Winterset schools, this study attempted to determine whether pupils, parents, and teachers have a preference in classroom organization in the Winterset Community School District, Winterset, Iowa.

Among the four grades, more respondents chose grade seven as being the grade where competition was greatest among students, where pupils had to work hardest to get assignments done, where pupils were under the most pressure with school work, where pupils were most anxious to do school work from day to day, where pupils did their best work in all subjects, where school work offered the most favorable degree of challenge to all pupils, and where pupils had the most trouble in getting school work done. Grade seven was further selected by more respondents as being the grade where pupil progress was of most concern, where pupils had the best opportunity to learn about other pupils, where pupils felt that they most enjoyed the other pupils in the homeroom group, where competition was more nearly ideal for desired educational growth, and where pupils showed the most growth in academic achievement. Grade seven was also chosen by more respondents as being the grade where pupils had the best attitude about school work, where class work moved at a pace best suited to the individual pupil, where pupils felt just as important as most of the other pupils in class, where pupils were most reluctant to enter into class discussions, and where the teacher was offered the

most favorable degree of challenge. The organizational plan in seventh grade was homogeneous pupil grouping and departmentalized classes.

From the choices of the four grades, more respondents chose grade five as being the grade where pupils received the proper amount of individual attention, where pupils felt more at ease in discussing personal problems with the teacher, where pupils felt more at ease in seeking teacher help, where the teacher had the best opportunity to fulfill all teacher obligations, and where the control of pupils was most favorable. The organizational plan in fifth grade was homogeneous pupil grouping with partial departmentalization of classes.

Among the four grades, more respondents chose grade six as being the grade where pupils seemed to be most upset about school experiences in general, where pupils felt that they least enjoyed the other pupils in the homeroom group, where pupils felt most out of place in their classes, and where pupils felt bored with school work in general. The organizational plan in sixth grade was heterogeneous pupil grouping in the homeroom and ability grouping in reading, arithmetic, language, and social studies on a semi-departmentalized basis.

With respect to the grade where pupils seemed to be least upset about school experiences in general, an equal number of choices were made for each of the grades four and five by a majority of the respondents. The organizational plan in fourth grade was heterogeneous pupil grouping, with some changing of classes for reading, and partial departmentalization of classes.

II. CONCLUSION

Pupils, parents and teachers of seventh grade in the Winterset schools at the time of this study expressed their opinion that the classroom organization grade seven was their first choice. The organizational plan of grade five was second choice; grade six was third choice and grade four was fourth choice.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of this study, the writer recommends no change in the grouping practices of the Winterset Community School District at this time. Future considerations for change should be based upon future findings in the community as well as upon changing concepts of educators.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

In this group, students are asked to describe their experiences, particularly in reading and writing, and to describe the grouping process. Students are asked to describe the role of the teacher in the grouping process.

TO STUDENTS OF SEVENTH GRADE -

You are being asked to help supply some information about your school experiences during the past four years. Your sincere attention to the questions that follow and your frank answers will be regarded as helpful to teachers and administrators in the Winterset schools, as well as to other students. It is possible that this information will also be helpful to other schools.

We are interested in knowing how you feel about your school experiences the past four years as a result of the type of classroom grouping that you experienced in each of the grades, four through seven. We are not interested in knowing how you feel about your experiences as a result of your association with a certain teacher or principal. Neither are we interested in knowing how you feel about a certain grade or building as such.

Because we are asking you to remember your experiences as far back as fourth grade, it might be best if we review for you the type of classroom grouping practiced in each grade.

In fourth grade, students in each homeroom have a wide range of learning abilities. The major emphasis on grouping is during reading classes when students of similar reading abilities are placed together. Some students go to a different room with a different teacher, others do not.

In fifth grade, students in each homeroom have similar learning abilities, particularly in reading which is the primary guiding factor in the grouping process. Students stay together as a class all day long and have one teacher for most classes.

In sixth grade, each homeroom is much like the fourth grade situation where there are pupils with a wide range of learning abilities. Class sessions as a homeroom group are science, health, music, art, and physical education. Sometime during each day, students get an opportunity to associate with other students and other teachers while attending classes in language, reading, arithmetic, and social studies according to individual abilities in each subject.

In seventh grade, students have a homeroom grouping similar to the plan used in fifth grade. All students stay together for each class except physical education and enrichment courses, but have a number of different teachers throughout the day.

15. In which grade do you think competition from other students was more nearly ideal?
16. In what grade do you think you made the most growth in what you learned?
17. In which grade do you think you had the best attitude about school work?
18. In which grade do you think class work moved at a pace best suited to you?
19. In which grade did you feel more at ease in discussing personal problems with the teacher?
20. In which grade did you feel more at ease in seeking teacher help with your class work?
21. In which grade did you feel you were just as important as most of the other pupils in class?
22. In which grade were you most reluctant to enter into class discussions?

[illegible]

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

TO PARENTS OF SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS -

You are being asked to help supply some information about the school experiences of your child during the past four years. Your sincere attention to the questions that follow and your frank answers will be regarded as helpful to teachers and administrators, as well as to other students, in the Winterset schools. It is possible that this information will also be helpful to other schools.

We are interested in knowing how you feel about your child's experiences the past four years as a result of the type of classroom grouping that he experienced in each of the grades, four through seven. We are not interested in knowing how you feel about his experiences as a result of his association, or yours, with a certain teacher or principal. Neither are we interested in knowing how you feel about a certain grade or building, as such.

Because we are asking you to remember your child's experiences as far back as fourth grade, it might be best to review for you the type of classroom grouping practiced in each grade.

In fourth grade, students in each homeroom have a wide range of learning abilities. The major emphasis on grouping is during reading classes when students of similar reading abilities are placed together. Some students go to a different room with a different teacher, others do not.

In fifth grade, students in each homeroom have similar learning abilities, particularly in reading which is the primary guiding factor in the grouping process. Students stay together as a class all day long and have one teacher for most classes.

In sixth grade, each homeroom is much like the fourth grade situation where there are pupils with a wide range of learning abilities. Class sessions as a homeroom group are science, health, music, art, and physical education. Sometime during each day, students get an opportunity to associate with other students and other teachers while attending classes in language, reading, arithmetic, and social studies according to individual abilities in each subject.

In seventh grade, students have a homeroom grouping similar to the plan used in fifth grade. All students stay together for each class except physical education and enrichment courses, but have a number of different teachers throughout the day.

Please complete the attached questionnaire and send it back to school with your child tomorrow. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Please read each question below and then indicate your choice by placing an (X) in the appropriate column to the right of the questions. Each column is headed by a number which corresponds to the grade situation that you choose. However, the last column, headed by the letter (N) is to be used for those questions where you do not feel that you can make a choice between grades.

	4	5	6	7	N
1. In which grade do you think competition from other students was greatest for your child?					
2. In which grade do you think your child had to work hardest to get his assignments done?					
3. In which grade do you think your child was under more pressure with his school work?					
4. In which grade do you think your child was most anxious to do school work from day to day?					
5. In which grade do you think your child felt out of place in his group?					
6. In which grade do you think your child felt bored with school work in general?					
7. In which grade do you think your child did his best work in all subjects?					
8. In which grade do you think school work was more of a challenge to your child?					
9. In which grade do you think your child had the most trouble getting his school work done?					
10. In which grade were you most concerned about the results on your child's report card?					
11. In which grade do you think your child had the best opportunity to learn about people from all walks of life?					
12. In which grade did your child seem to be most upset about school experiences in general?					
13. In which grade did your child seem to be least upset about school experiences in general?					

14. In which grade do you think your child received the proper amount of individual attention?
15. In which grade do you think competition was more nearly ideal for desired educational growth?
16. In which grade do you think your child showed the most growth in academic achievement?
17. In which grade do you think your child had the best attitude about school work?
18. In which grade do you think all class work moves at a pace best suited to the individual pupil?
19. In which grade do you think your child felt more at ease in discussing personal problems with the teacher?
20. In which grade do you think your child felt more at ease in seeking teacher help with class work?

[illegible]

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

1. Name of teacher _____
2. School _____
3. District _____
4. State _____
5. Grade _____
6. Length of service _____
7. Number of years in this grade _____
8. Number of years in this school _____
9. Number of years in this district _____
10. Number of years in this state _____
11. Number of years in this country _____
12. Number of years in this world _____
13. Number of years in this universe _____
14. Number of years in this galaxy _____
15. Number of years in this system _____
16. Number of years in this planet _____
17. Number of years in this country _____
18. Number of years in this state _____
19. Number of years in this district _____
20. Number of years in this school _____

TO TEACHERS OF GRADES FOUR THROUGH SEVEN -

You are being asked to cooperate in a study to determine if pupils, parents, and teachers have a preference in type of classroom organization.

This study is being conducted with the seventh grade pupils in the Winterset schools, the parents of these seventh graders, and teachers of grades four through seven. The seventh grade students have been selected for the study because they have experienced a different pupil grouping practice in each of the grades four through seven. The selection of the teachers in the study was arbitrary, but since the study involves grades four through seven, it seemed best to include the teachers of these groups.

You are being asked to make a comparison of the various grouping practices in grades four through seven with regard to how each practice affects pupils and, to a limited extent, how each plan affects teachers. It is realized that you are most familiar with the grouping practice in the grade in which you teach. This need not be a deterrent in making your comparisons, particularly if you have experienced more than one type of grouping practice. You are asked to express an opinion which does not need to be based upon experience only.

It is not a purpose of the study to compare personalities of teachers and principals. Neither is it a purpose to compare buildings and grades, as such. The purpose of the study is to compare pupil grouping practices. For that reason, an explanation of each grouping practice is given below. Each practice is identified by plan so you may indicate your choice by plan on the questionnaire.

Plan A

In fourth grade, students in each homeroom have a wide range of learning abilities. The major emphasis on grouping is during reading classes when students of similar reading abilities are placed together. Some students go to a different room with a different teacher, others do not.

Plan B

In fifth grade, students in each homeroom have similar learning abilities, particularly in reading which is the primary guiding factor in the grouping process. Students stay together as a class all day long and have one teacher for most classes.

Plan C

In sixth grade, each homeroom is much like the fourth grade situation where there are pupils with a wide range of learning abilities. Class sessions as a homeroom group are science, health, music, art, and physical education. Sometime during each day, students have an opportunity to associate with other students and other teachers while attending classes

in language, reading, arithmetic, and social studies according to individual abilities in each subject.

Plan D

In seventh grade, students have a homeroom grouping similar to the plan used in fifth grade. All students stay together for each class except physical education and enrichment courses, but have a number of different teachers throughout the day.

Please read each question below and then indicate your choice by placing an (X) in the appropriate column to the right of the questions. Each column is headed by a letter which corresponds to the plan used in each grade. The last column, however, headed by the letter (E) is to be used for those questions where you do not feel that you can make a choice between plans.

	A	B	C	D	E
1. Under which plan do you think competition is greatest among the pupils?					
2. Under which plan do you think all pupils have to work hardest to get assignments done?					
3. Under which plan do you think all pupils are under more pressure with school work?					
4. Under which plan do you think pupils are most anxious to do school work from day to day?					
5. Under which plan do you think pupils feel most out of place in their classes?					
6. Under which plan do you think pupils feel bored with school work in general?					
7. Under which plan do you think pupils do their best work in all subjects?					
8. Under which plan do you think school work offers the most favorable challenge to all pupils?					
9. Under which plan do you think all pupils have the most trouble getting school work done?					
10. Under which plan do you think students and parents are most concerned about pupil progress?					
11. Under which plan do you think all pupils have the best opportunity to learn about other pupils?					
12. Under which plan do you think pupils are most upset about school experiences in general?					
13. Under which plan do you think pupils are least upset about school experiences in general?					
14. Under which plan do you think all pupils receive the proper amount of individual attention?					

